



Job Roles and Responsibilities in Canada

Pharmacy
Technicians



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Disclaimer

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Please contact the Winnipeg Technical College at 989-6500 or www.wtc.mb.ca if you have questions about the contents of this document



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Introduction

Pharmacy technicians generally obtain a certificate before or during employment in a community pharmacy or other health care facilities or many stay as pharmacy assistants. The occupation falls under many other health related occupations and so this booklet provides general and specific information about securing employment as a pharmacy technician.

Description

Pharmacy technicians are employed in hospitals, clinics, offices of health care professionals, nursing homes, optical retail stores and laboratories, pharmacies and medical pathology laboratories. Pharmacy Technicians are listed under the National Occupational Classification (NOC) #3414.¹

Other health related occupations:

- Chiropractic assistant
- Clinical laboratory helper
- Occupational therapy assistant
- Ophthalmic laboratory technician - retail
- Optical laboratory assistant
- Optometrist assistant
- Orthopedic technologist
- Pharmacy assistant
- Pharmacy technician
- Physiotherapy assistant
- Rehabilitation assistant
- Therapy assistant

¹ www.jobfutures.ca



Work Environment

Pharmacy technicians work in clean, organized, well-lit and well-ventilated areas. Most of their work day is spent on their feet. They may be required to lift heavy boxes or to use ladders to get supplies from high shelves.

Language Requirements

Pharmacy Technicians should be able to communicate clearly in English to do their job well. It is very important to employers that you have excellent oral communication skills so you can communicate with them, with your co-workers and with the clients whom you may assist.

It is important to note that language entrance requirements and test requirements vary in different colleges. Contact the colleges to see what is required.

Recommended Canadian Language Benchmark Levels for Pharmacy Technicians²

Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
7	7	7	7

Recommended TOEFL scores³

Paper Based	Computer Based	Internet Based
550	213	80

For those individuals where English is an Additional Language (EAL), it is recommended that you take a Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test to determine your level of English, and to see which English classes are available to you. Contact the Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre for an appointment:

² Note: This occupation/training has not been formally benchmarked.

³ These are the current TOEFL entrance requirements at some colleges.



Winnipeg English Language Assessment and Referral Centre

400 - 275 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 2B3
Phone: 204-943-5387

Skills

Pharmacy technicians should have the following skills:

- Interest in biological science and in the health and well-being of others
- Ability to establish good working relationships
- Ability to concentrate while performing routine tasks
- Good oral and written communication skills
- Ability to work with others as part of a team
- Ability to remain calm during stressful situations
- Good observation skills
- Ability to follow instructions
- Physical strength and stamina
- Good hand-eye coordination, manual and finger dexterity
- Patience and perseverance in creating a product to exact specifications
- Basic computer skills, typing skills (30 words per minute)
- Knowledge of basic computer terms
- Good mathematical skills and knowledge of the metric system
- Interest in staying up to-date with new products and techniques



Do you have many of these skills?



Main Duties

Pharmacy technicians perform some or all of the following duties:

Pharmacy assistants help pharmacists by:

- Compounding, packaging and labeling pharmaceutical products
- Counting tablets
- Maintaining prescription records and inventories of medications and pharmaceutical products
- Providing medication and other health care products to patients

Technicians working in hospital or community pharmacies may also:

- Receive written prescriptions or requests for prescription refills from patients or from the doctor's office
- Verify that the information on the prescription is complete and accurate
- Prepare the prescription (this involves retrieving, counting, pouring, weighing, measuring and sometimes mixing the medication)
- Enter the prescription into the computer
- Prepare the prescription labels (this involves selecting the type of prescription container and attaching the prescription labels to the container)
- Price and file the prescription (the pharmacist must check the prescription before it is given to the patient)
- Keep a record of patient information and maintain patient profiles
- Handle insurance claims
- Stock and take inventory of prescription and over-the-counter medications



- Refer any questions regarding prescriptions, drug information or health matters to a pharmacist

In hospitals and personal care homes, they have added responsibilities, such as:

- Preparing and delivering the medicine to patients (the pharmacist must check the order before it is delivered)
- Assessing and maintaining patient's medication profile
- Assembling a 24-hour supply of medicine for each patient
- Packaging and labelling each dose separately
- Placing packages into individual patient medicine cabinets until the supervising pharmacist checks them for accuracy



Do you think you would enjoy doing the work described above?

The Importance of Safety in Canada

Safety in the workplace is very important in Canada. Because it is essential for a Pharmacy Technician to be concise and accurate at all times, **it is expected that you ask questions when you don't understand. DO NOT proceed if you are uncertain!** It is always better to ask when you are unsure.

For more information: <http://www.safemanitoba.com/>

Terms & Conditions

Pharmacy technicians work the same number of hours as pharmacists. Work may be in the evenings, at night, on the weekends and on holidays. This is especially the case in places that are open 24 hours a day, such as hospitals and community pharmacies. After working in the profession a number of years, technicians may receive greater



control over their hours of work. There are many opportunities for part-time work in both community and hospital settings.

Accuracy is critical as errors can have serious consequences for the patients or clients. This is why it is essential that pharmacy technicians have excellent listening and speaking skills.

Earnings

In Manitoba

\$20,000.00 per annum - starting

\$25,500.00 per annum - average

\$37,000.00 per annum – high

Education / Training

A pharmacy technician's education program may consist of some of the following outcomes:

- Reading prescriptions and selecting the correct medications for dispensing
- Using computers to process information, fill prescriptions and maintain patient medication profiles
- Compounding creams, oral liquids and sterile products
- Pharmacy laws, ethics and practices
- Performing calculations to determine dosages and quantities to prepare/dispense
- Computer skills



Colleges

Herzing Career College, 723 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3G 0M8,
(204) 775-8175, info@wpg.herzing.edu

Robertson College, 265 Notre Dame Ave
Winnipeg, MB , R3B 1N9, Tel: (204) 943-5661, Fax: (204) 926-8320
Toll Free: 1-877-880-8789, E-mail: Info@RobertsonCollege.com

Winnipeg Technical College, 1551 Pembina Hwy, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2E5, (204)
989-6566, <http://www.wtc.mb.ca>

Work Practicum

Pharmacy technician programs usually feature a work practicum placement in a local workplace, which provides students with valuable on-the-job training and experience. The length of the work practicum is different in each college. Students use skills learned in the classroom and develop new skills through working within an actual employer's facility. Programs should offer both a community pharmacy placement and an institutional pharmacy placement.

Some colleges require students to have CPR, immunization records and criminal record checks completed by the start of classes.

Employment Requirements

A certificate from a recognized Pharmacy Technician program is *preferred* to enter this profession as most employers require a certificate.



Employment Opportunities

The employment prospects for pharmacy technicians have been affected by the downsizing in the Internet pharmacy sector in 2005 and 2006. Jobs in this occupation are found throughout Manitoba, with a greater concentration in Winnipeg. Across industries, the majority are employed in Health Care and Social Assistance at 57%, followed by Retail Trade at 34% and Manufacturing at 5%.

Professional Associations and Unions

Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association (MPhA), 187 St. Mary's Road, Winnipeg, MB, R2H 1J2, Tel: (204) 233-1411, Fax: 204-237-3468
E-mail: info@mpha.mb.ca

Canadian Associations of Pharmacy Technicians – Manitoba, CAPT Manitoba, Box 52105 N.P.O, Winnipeg, MB, R2M 5P9, E-mail: info@captmanitoba.ca

References

The Canadian Association of Pharmacy Technicians. (2008) Retrieved, March 2, 2008.
www.capt.ca

Diversity Working: Pharmacy Technician Jobs. (2008) Retrieved, April 15, 2008.
www.diversityworking.com

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